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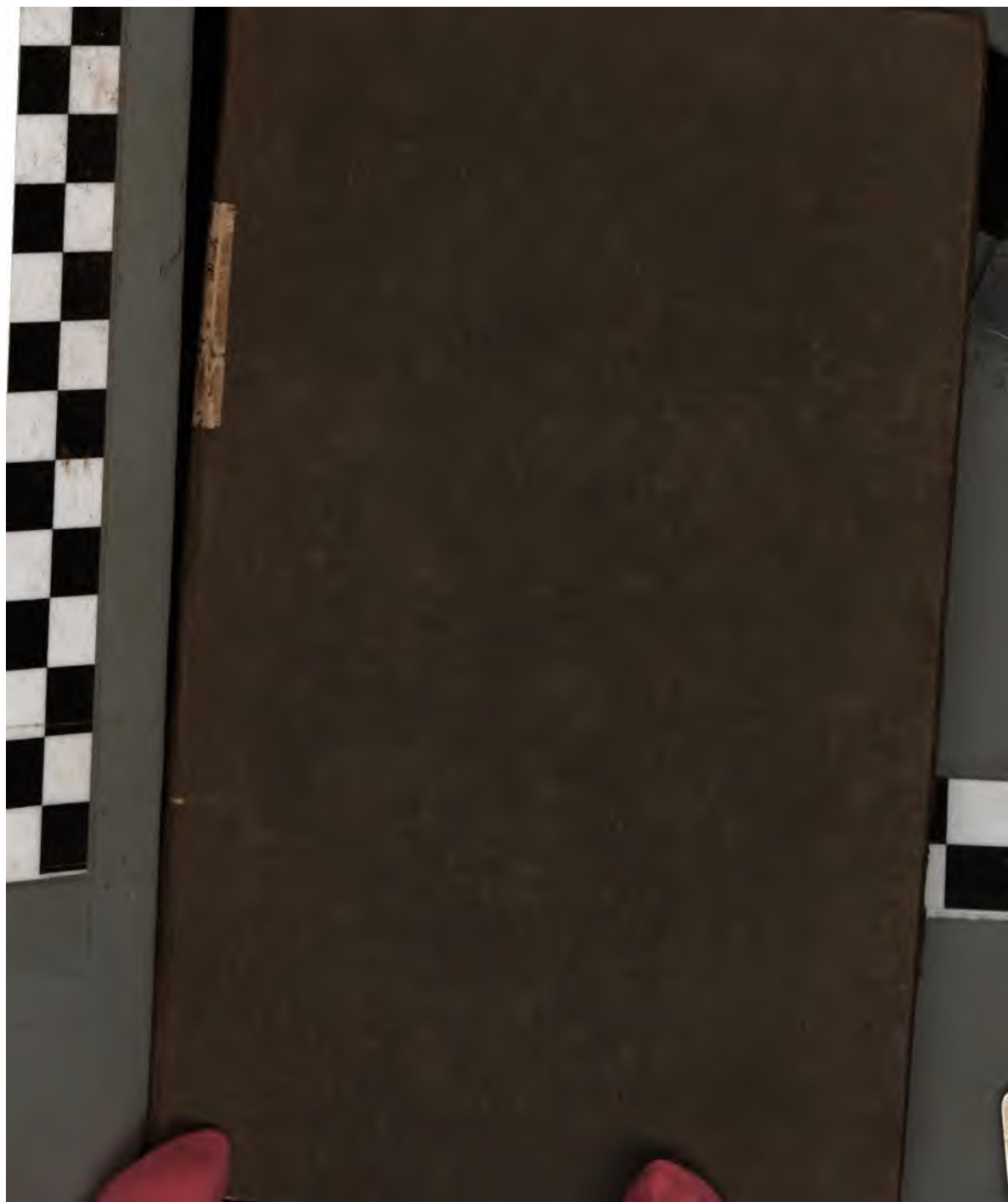
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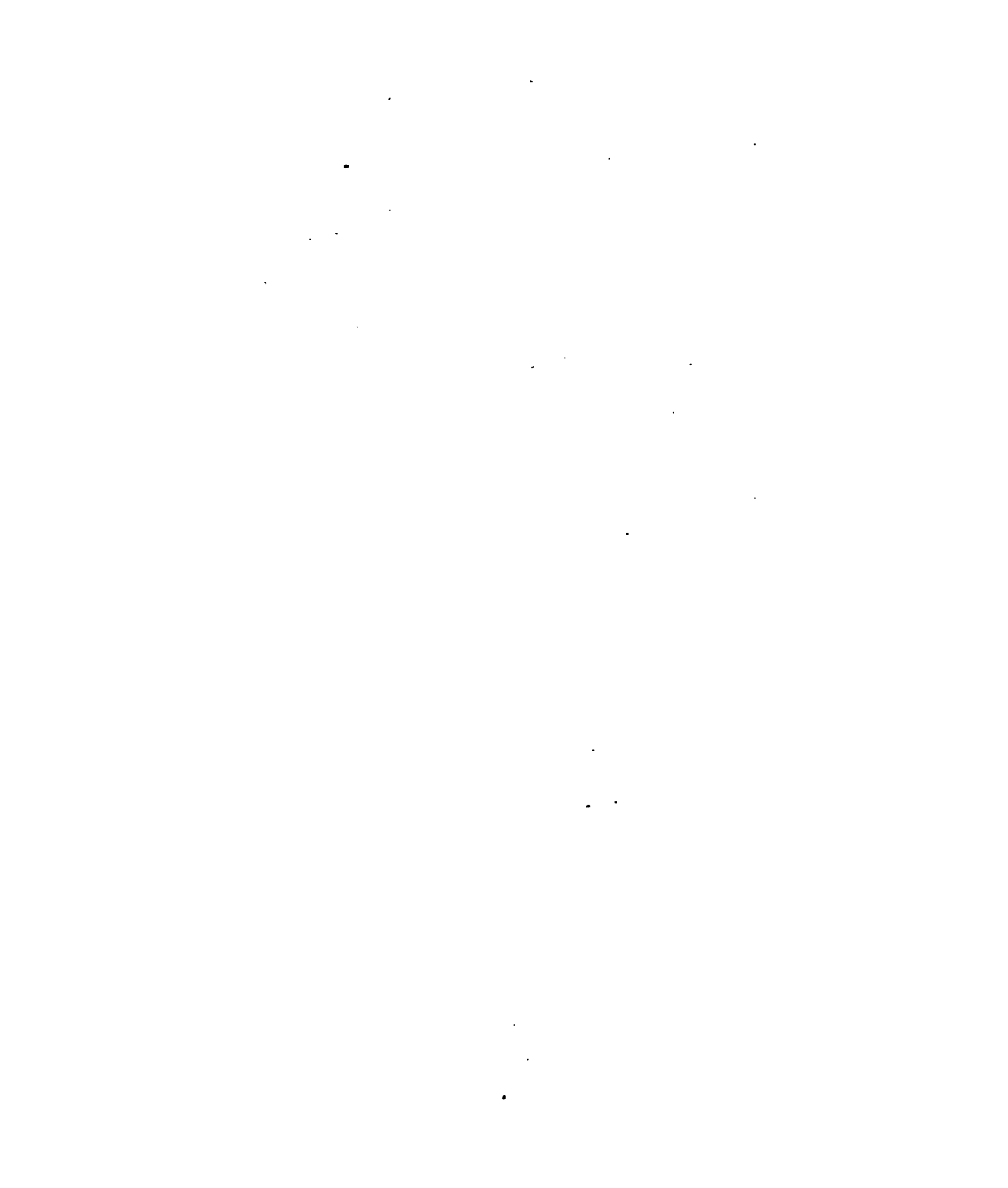
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LETTERS TO A FRIEND,

&c. &c.



LETTERS TO A FRIEND,

CONTAINING

S.H. 1827.

THE WRITER'S OBJECTIONS TO HIS
FORMER WORK,

ENTITLED,

Dialogues on Important Subjects,

PUBLISHED IN 1819;

TOGETHER WITH

HIS REASONS FOR BELIEVING IN THE PROPER DEITY OF
THE SON OF GOD,

AND THE

DIVINE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY GHOST.



BY

JAMES HARRINGTON EVANS,

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Wadham College, Oxford.*



PUBLISHED BY JAMES NISBET,

21, BERNERS STREET, LONDON.

1826.

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PREFACE.

IF the error of man, with regard to the truth of God, were the effect of mere mistake, if it were only the consequence of the darkness of the human mind, and that darkness were not the result of sin, the acknowledgment of such error would be attended with comparatively little regret. But when the blindness of the understanding is connected by an unerring apostle with the blindness of the heart, Eph. iv. 18. there is in the conviction of our errors enough to humble us and abase us before God for ever. The writer of

these letters feels, he trusts, in some small degree, a consciousness of this.

But while he feels it, he must allow, at the same time, that it is not an unmixed feeling which pervades his mind in the confession of it. For if there be something unspeakably painful, as most certainly there is, in the remembrance of having been betrayed into a denial of any portion of Gospel truth, there is, at the same time, a satisfaction which neither his lip nor his pen can ever fully utter, in the acknowledgment of the divine goodness, in being enabled to say, that he denies it no more. It yields such a consoling testimony of the faithfulness, love, and patience of an ever-gracious God, it so declares him to be God and not man, whose ways are not our ways, whose thoughts are not our thoughts, as constrains him to cry out,

“ O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, because we have sinned against thee, but to the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses.”

With regard to the propriety and wisdom of this publication, there may possibly exist a diversity of sentiment. Some may be of opinion that it would have displayed more prudence if the public mind had not been recalled to the consideration of a controversial subject, and if the writer had suffered his former work to have passed quietly into oblivion, than, by again disturbing its ashes, to cause it, in some measure, to revive in the minds of men.

But others may take quite an opposite view, and may regard the open and explicit disavowal of the contents of that work, as the very least which could be done by one who bears the

name of Christian, as the least attempt which could be made to undo, as far as in him lieth, that which has been done amiss.

It is needless to say that the writer is of the latter opinion. He is far indeed from asserting that consequences are to be disregarded by any wise and prudent man. He is far from maintaining that they are not to be duly weighed before any decision of moment should take place in the mind; and that the obligation to any action should not be very obvious and very powerful, for a man to decide on its performance, when such action appears to be attended with even the probability of evil.

The present occasion, however, does not appear to him to be one, the consideration of which is attended with

any real difficulty. While there seems but small probability of evil as likely to arise from the publication of this little work, the obligation to send it forth into the world seems exceedingly obvious and powerful. It is the payment of a debt. It is the wish to neutralize a poison. It is the endeavour to expose false opinion, and to expose it too, it is humbly conceived, as it could not be exposed by another individual, namely, by him who once maintained it. It is the confession of error before men and unto God, as openly too as the error itself was openly avowed.

More than seven years have now elapsed since the Dialogues were published. The writer has had time, therefore, as well as opportunity, neither has the anxious desire been wanting, to revise and consider the con-

tents of that volume. What he has now written, he might have written, as to its substance, in 1823, when he sent his public disavowal to the New Evangelical Magazine. But he preferred giving the bare outline then, which he has endeavoured to fill up now.

As an additional reason for the publication of these letters, the writer would observe that he has reason to know, and he can truly add, unfeignedly to lament that there are individuals who, at the present moment, not only read the work to which he alludes, but who read it with approbation. Upon these he has his eye more immediately fixed. Some of these are personally strangers to himself, he has no probability of direct intercourse with them, he has never seen them, and in this world never may.

He has the poignant feeling of knowing that he has been the means of unsettling the minds of some whom he may never meet, till they meet together before the bar of God.

How imperious, then, does that motive appear, which urges him to take up the pen, even if it were only for their sakes. To these he feels that he has no other means of introduction, for to these his pulpit is no medium of address. Whatever influence he might once have had over them, whatever regard they might once bear towards him, whatever arguments he may now bring forward, he would pray, and earnestly desire, might be especially overruled and blessed, for their sakes, by the Spirit of truth. Oh that the Eternal Spirit Himself, might bless the work to their full and entire conviction. It is not impossible

also, but that others may, hereafter, have their minds entangled with the sophistries of the question—that as it has deceived some in the present day, and in the days that are past, it may deceive others in the days yet to come. And to these the present public renunciation of past opinions may, through grace, prove a real blessing, when the hand which has penned it has long mouldered in the grave, and mixed itself with the clod of the valley.

With regard to his mode of treating the subject, the writer has studied to be as brief as was consistent with his being perspicuous. The reader will not expect amusement; if he derive satisfaction, he will have no cause to regret the trouble of a perusal. A laboured defence of the doctrine of the Trinity has not been attempted.

For this the reader would be referred to abler writers, and more diffuse dissertations; and among these, especially to Dr. Wardlaw's most valuable treatise on the Socinian controversy—a work which, as immediately opposed to Socinian arguments, had no direct reference indeed to the writer's former opinions, yet was it one to which he is indebted, under God, for many substantial and convincing remarks—a work which, whether we consider the striking force of its argument, or, the beautiful perspicuity of its style, its masterly arrangement of the whole subject, or the admirable detail of its parts, but, above all, the candour, integrity, and meekness, which its author displays; it must ever stand prominently forward in the ranks of controversial divinity. The aim of the writer of these letters has been of a much humbler, as well as a

more humiliating nature. He has had to reply to himself—to answer his own arguments—to oppose his own premises—and to deny his own conclusions.

He has endeavoured to refute his own work in a general way, although not in particular detail. It being conceived, that if some false arguments pervaded the whole book, it were enough to invalidate these arguments; for, when invalidated, every inference drawn from them must be invalidated with them.

In the progress of the work, the reader will have to observe that very many texts, which are usually cited in proof of the proper deity of the Son of God, and the divine personality of the Holy Ghost, are not adduced. Those only are cited which brought

the strongest conviction to the writer's own mind. Nor has he written all that could have been written, even by himself, on those very texts. That only has been brought forward which had most readily presented itself to his own satisfaction. If the reader does not bear this in mind, much misconception must necessarily ensue.

In the following pages there will be found no laboured definition of the doctrine of the Trinity. The writer believes the Father to be God, the Son to be God, the Holy Ghost to be God, personally distinct from each other, essentially one—the one God of Israel. Beyond this he professes to know nothing.

And now to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father, and the blessing of the Holy Ghost,

the writer would, in all abasement of spirit, and humble and adoring gratitude, commit his little work, praying for such a blessing upon it, to the convincing the unconvinced, establishing the wavering, and settling those who may be fluctuating upon the subject, as may be to the removal of error, and confirmation of the truth ; to the pulling down the pride of human speculation, and to the comforting the meek and lowly enquirer ; to the abasement of man, and to the glory of God. Amen.

To GEORGE C * * *, Esq.

IRELAND.



LETTER I.

Hampstead, July, 1826.

MY DEAR SIR,

ALTHOUGH this will be the only mode by which you will receive these letters, you will, I am persuaded, forgive my addressing them to yourself. More than seven years have passed on since we last met each other. I have not, however, forgotten the promise which I once gave you, that if any thing should ever occur to induce

me to alter the opinions which I then held on the person of our Lord, and on the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit, I would communicate such a result to yourself. Such an alteration of sentiment having now for some time occurred, my promise demands its fulfilment.

Whatever may have been the motives in your own mind for making this request, and even if the promise itself should have passed away from your remembrance, still I cannot be exonerated, in my own judgment, from the solemn obligation of informing you, and, by the same medium, of informing others also, what has led me, under God, to a change of my former sentiments.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours most truly,

J. H. EVANS.

LETTER II.

Hampstead, July, 1826.

MY DEAR SIR,

THAT the sentiments contained in my Dialogues, published in 1819, are subversive of the real deity of the Son of God, and infinitely derogatory to his true dignity and majesty, that the Holy Spirit, in being denied to be a divine person, is denied as to all his own personal deity and glory, is a point on which I have long been since convinced; and the more I regard the consequences which follow from such a system, the more awful, I am constrained to say, do they appear. And yet, be assured, that the bare *possibility* even of such a conclusion, as an inference to be

drawn from the premises which I held, was far from my own contemplation, at the period when that volume was written. This may appear strange to some, but I do not apprehend it will appear so to yourself. There is a subtlety, an imposing speciousness in some parts of the indwelling and Sabellian scheme, and such a scheme my system really was, which is well calculated to conceal, in some points of view, its real deformity from our sight. Besides, my dear Sir, you are well aware that such is the power of darkness upon the human mind, or rather such is its native darkness, that when the Spirit of truth, either to humble our pride, to check the progress of a dangerous love of speculation, or to correct an evil by suffering us to discover its real nature by its effects, leaves it, for ever so little to itself, conclusions the most obvious

fail to be drawn, consequences the most certain cease to be deduced. Because I did not deny the *work* of the Spirit upon the heart, felt that God could alone convince, convert, and sanctify the sinner, and looked to the Father, through Christ, to begin, carry on, and finish the work, I did not even suspect that the Holy Spirit could be, in the slightest degree, dishonoured by me; and in the midst of a plain avowal that Immanuel was not God at all, that is, in any real and proper sense, I certainly persuaded myself that I considered him to be God over all, and, however inconsistent it may appear, in my heart worshipped him as such.

I do not, be assured, write this as if it were my vindication. This my letter contains not my apology, it contains my bitter self-reproach. Let who will condemn my former senti-

ments, no one will, no one can condemn them, as I myself will condemn them. But I should be untrue to truth, and faithless to myself; but more than this, I should be ungrateful in the highest degree to the faithfulness and love of an ever-gracious God, did I not thus openly acknowledge that tender dealing, which withheld me from myself at that solemn period of my life, which restrained me from so ruinous a state of mind as that which would, from the conviction of judgment, seek to deny the glory of the Holy Ghost, and to degrade the divine majesty of the Son of God.

As a proof to you how little I was really conscious to myself of the actual tendency of my own principles, I would observe that when I was broadly charged with holding a system which viewed the Saviour as God indeed by name, but as a mere man

by nature, and with an entire denial of the real glory of the Holy Ghost in the economy of redemption, such a charge appeared to me of so awful and appalling a nature, that it made the deepest and most solemn impression upon my mind, and I well recollect my secret conviction, that if such was really my system, it could never be true.

But when this charge was again and again repeated, and that too by many whose opinions I could not but respect, I was led by it seriously, and I trust prayerfully, to review my scheme altogether, and narrowly to survey the ground on which it had ventured to stand. This I did at intervals, *for a period of about three years*, that is, till towards the middle of 1823. And what was the effect? I began to find that the ground, which I once thought so strong, seemed to

tremble under me. Instead of a rock, which I once esteemed it to be, I discovered it to be the sand, or rather some treacherous morass, which seemed to threaten the whole fabric with inevitable ruin. My former view was found to be unscriptural and most dangerous, and my mind was gradually, but firmly, settled in the conviction that the Son and the Holy Ghost are, with the Father, truly, properly, personally God.

In consequence of this, I inserted, in one of the monthly magazines in 1823, a brief, but an unreserved retraction of my former sentiments, and I need scarcely add, bought up the remaining copies of the work.

But can I ever forget the solemn conviction which was now presented to my consideration? Sensible as, I trust, I am, and shall ever be, of the mercy and grace of God, that my

understanding was not permitted to remain in that darkness which once surrounded it, as to this inexpressibly important truth; infinite as is my debt of gratitude to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for that boundless compassion that was displayed towards me, yet was the discovery itself, I may truly add, of a nature the most affecting to my own soul, and accompanied with the most pungent regret.

Sorrow and myself, my dear Sir, are not entirely strangers to each other. I am not wholly unacquainted with those trials which are sooner or later the portion of our common humanity. The cup of anguish is not entirely foreign to these lips, nor am I without some little experience that man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward. I have known what it is to lose, one after another, friends once near and dear to my heart. I

have known what it is to follow, and that lately, a father to his grave. I have known also, what was more bitter than even that bitterness, to have been classed, by some of the friends of my Lord and Master, among his very enemies, among those whose principles I never held, nay, whose principles I cordially and entirely rejected. But I can in sincerity assert, that to have holden the opinions contained in the Dialogues, in the first place, and in the next to have published them to others, is, and I believe ever will be, considered by myself as the most afflicting circumstance of my life.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours affectionately,

J. H. EVANS.

LETTER III.

Hampstead, July, 1826.

MY DEAR SIR,

YOU are aware that the system which I had been led to adopt, in reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, has been usually termed the indwelling scheme. It is by no means a new theory—but ~~this~~ consideration is but little in its favour. It supposes the Father to have taken his Son, the man Christ Jesus, into an union with himself, so close and indissoluble, as that the Son had thereby a relative right to all the glories of the Godhead, is in consequence a partaker of real Deity, is declared to be God, and is God.

It would be needless for me to go into a long and minute detail of the

progress of erroneous sentiment, in relation to this untenable and dangerous opinion—an opinion which thus, in the very sketch I have given of it, supposes *man* to have a relative right to the glories of the *Godhead*, that is, finite to have a relative right to the glories of Infinite, and if so, to the glory of being independent and self-existent, which is, in fact, to deny God to be God, and man to be man—gives the Saviour the name of God, but not the glory—speaks of a man's godhead, which is as unintelligible as to talk of human deity.

And yet it may be some satisfaction to you, if I briefly relate those gradual advances which I made towards the system.

When it pleased the Eternal Spirit to convince me, I trust, of my lost estate and condition as a sinner, both by nature and by practice, and to lead

me, as one condemned by the law, and self-condemned by my own conscience, to the cross of the Son of God, for pardon, righteousness, and for eternal life; when, as one utterly hopeless and helpless, I was brought to renounce all other dependence than that which sprang from the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, most certainly I held the usually received opinion of three Divine Persons in one Godhead.

My ministry, also, when I was a member of the Establishment, broadly proclaimed the same truth. It was, indeed, of such a nature, as little to agitate questions, of any sort, in relation to polemic divinity. I was situated among a simple, affectionate, and, for the most part, very poor people. It had pleased the Lord, in his sovereign mercy, to bless the word to the souls of sinners. I be-

held many around me earnestly asking, What must I do to be saved?—others led to receive Christ as all their hope for time and eternity—others living upon the fulness of that Saviour whom they had, through grace, received, and adorning, as through the same grace, with but very few exceptions, they still adorn, that doctrine which they professed. Of other Christians we saw but little. To the religious world we were, in a great degree, minister and people, alike strangers, unknowing and unknown. No wonder, then, if, at such a period of my life, disputable questions concerning the niceties of any point in theology, but little occupied either my mind or theirs. I preached to them, as far as I knew it, the total corruption of man's nature—the necessity of a new birth unto righteousness and true holiness—God's everlasting love to his church and

people—the doctrine of imputed righteousness—and the necessity of real sanctification: and, in all this, set forth the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as personally and distinctly sustaining covenant offices in the economy of salvation. I can easily believe, indeed, that some ill-advised expressions, some assertions which required the correction of a maturer judgment, sometimes escaped my lips. But the above formed the substance of my preaching among them; and my congregation in John Street would, I am confident, feel no little surprize if I were to read them some of the sermons which I then delivered, that is, in 1812, 13, 14, and more, perhaps, when I tell them that those very sermons I could, with very little alteration, preach to them at the present moment.

Soon after my leaving the Establishment, however, and my settling in Lon-

don, circumstances occurred, which I need not detail, but which led me to oppose certain statements, which went to assert that Jesus the man was God by the indwelling of the Father. This was towards the close of 1817. And it was not till I descended into the arena of controversy, that I began to discover how little I had really entered into the minute consideration of the question ; that I had, indeed, in the years that were past, embraced simply what I saw was simply revealed, and the truth of which I felt so needful to my own soul ; but that, as it regarded the subtle queries of an opponent, or the real argument of the point, or those nice distinctions which the ingenuity of man has devised upon the subject, I had never once regarded them.

This state of mind, however desirable it may appear in some points

of view, exposed me to very serious evils in others. Error must be plausible, or it would never deceive. I have before observed, that there is an imposing speciousness in some parts of the indwelling scheme. It does not set out, as the Socinian, with the avowed principle of lowering the Saviour from a dignity to which it is supposed that he has no title; this scheme *professes* to give him the greatest glory. It does not suppose that the work of the Spirit is unnecessary, or is the work of a creature, but declares it is God himself, influencing the soul by his own divine power. All this needs prayerful investigation, and requires the touchstone of Scripture in order to its detection. It is such as is the more likely to influence any mind, in proportion as that mind has never previously considered the difficulties which attend such a view of

truth. For the judgment may probably incline towards it, as embracing, on the whole, fewer difficulties, without reflecting that instead of involving *less* difficulties, it involves *far greater* than the Trinitarian side of the question, and that it can only be esteemed less difficult till it be examined.

In 1818 some of Dr. Watts's works fell into my hands. I read them with that portion of respect which the high esteem I entertained for his talents, and the real veneration I held for his piety, were naturally calculated to inspire. I read them much, and with no little attention. And although I thought that I saw what sometimes appeared to me as unsettled, and sometimes as contradictory statements, yet, as in many parts there was an evident leaning to the indwelling scheme, and in some a real defence of it, it can excite but little

wonder if the violence of my opposition began insensibly to abate. It cannot, at least, be considered as very strange, if I no longer thought that such a scheme involved a denial of the real deity of our Lord, when one, whom I had never heard charged with such a denial, appeared so decidedly, in some parts of his works, to favour it.

Certain however it is, his mode of reasoning greatly settled, or rather let me say, greatly unsettled, my mind. And if he had himself any definite ideas of a distinction of persons in the Godhead, most true it is, he was in no small degree the means of leading me to a denial of any such distinction.

If he had been a man of less piety, betrayed less sweetness of spirit, shewn less skill in argument, exhibited less power of research, I had, perhaps, been little influenced by him.

And yet, my dear Sir, how little has all this really to do, in the absence of direct testimony from the Word of God, with settling an enquiry about a Scriptural truth?

In 1819, concluding my views on the subject to be settled, I was induced to publish; and next to the holding of such opinions, the publishing of them to others is what I the most deeply and bitterly regret.

Although many things seemed to urge me forward, such as the entreaties of some who heard me, challenges from others, together with expostulations and upbraidings for my silence, and my own desires to have some other medium than the pulpit, in which to maintain and defend my opinions, still that all this should have had sufficient influence over me, as to induce me to come before the world on such a subject, at that time, from the

press, excites, at the present moment, my unfeigned surprize. Differing, as I then did, from the wisest, the best, the holiest of mankind, lately receiving, though not a new, yet to most an unheard of opinion, my only right track lay in silence, meditation, and prayer.

It is now more than seven years since that step was taken. I have had abundance of time to pause upon it in its consequences, and retrace the motives which influenced my conduct. For the step itself, no one will, no one can censure me as I censure myself, although few, perhaps, can fully enter into the real difficulties of my situation.

You will not be surprised if I add, that the remembrance of my former readiness to unfold my opinion to the world, at that period of my life, has produced a proportionate slowness to come before the public on this subject since the alteration of my sentiments.

Many may, I fear, have censured me for my silence, many may have misunderstood my motives for it, but I have acted as before God, and to the best of my judgment. My pulpit, I have reason to be thankful, has not been silent. It has long borne testimony, I humbly hope, to that portion of divine truth, which once, and I thankfully add, but once, my pen denied. And now I would desire that both together would openly proclaim this avowal of my soul, with the ascription of equal and undivided glory, to Father, Son, and Spirit, the one God of Israel for ever and ever.

Perhaps when the pulpit hears this voice no longer, and this hand shall guide the pen no more for ever, when the soul may have passed into that world where darkness, and error, and sin, the cause of both, shall be known no longer, it may not be without a

blessing to some individual or another, as his eye glances over these pages, to observe how God can by his grace withhold a man from himself, preserve even in the midst of his own delusions, and that too while he severely chastens, in order to restrain from future evil. Perhaps it may not be without its instruction to such an one to be told, that as long as those erroneous opinions were retained, a most manifest withering was experienced in the ministry, and no little evil effect in my own soul. Nor may it be without its use to remark, that the grace of God can so far overcome the mortification arising from an avowal of error, as to make a man consider the moment of the most public acknowledgment of it as one of the most peaceful of his life.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours affectionately,

J. H. EVANS.

LETTER IV.

Hampstead, July, 1826.

MY DEAR SIR,

BEFORE I go into a more particular consideration of the contents of my book, I would in my present letter take somewhat of a *general survey of it*. And in the first place, I cannot but remark, that while in the preface, Biblicus professes never to be enquiring into the question, *how* can these things be? *how* can there be three divine persons in the one Godhead? yet that, in point of fact, this enquiry forms that very difficulty with which he is constantly perplexing himself, during a very great part of the body of the work. So that the supposed

inconceivableness of the doctrine of the Trinity, must have formed a real and powerful objection in his own mind, at that very period, when he supposed it to form none.

This is a consideration which deserves serious regard. Men, I am persuaded, often deceive themselves here; they imagine that what they desire is only that a certain point should be revealed, and that if revealed, however deep and mysterious it may be, they would ask no more. But, in reality, this is not the case, for such is the state of their mind, that, even if it were revealed, the secret conviction of the supposed impossibility would erect an insuperable barrier against its being received.

Such a posture of soul, it must be acknowledged, was certainly one which was peculiarly unfavourable for the consideration of any truth. The

determination is, in such cases, in reality previously made. Its decision is already formed. Reason leaving the lowly seat which, in every creature, but especially in every fallen creature, it ought ever to occupy, has usurped the throne of faith, and taking the place which it is so ill adapted to fill, it utters its dicta, as to what must or must not be the truth. For it to talk of enquiry, therefore, is quite superfluous. Its own standard is become the standard of revelation. Nor does such a case seem to admit of remedy, till the usurper be dethroned, and reason become that handmaid to faith, which, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, is her only right and proper situation.

My next general observation is in relation to the doctrine of the pre-existent soul of Christ—a theory which, most certainly, led Biblicus,

as it has led others, and let not this be forgotten, to a denial of the real deity of the Son of God. In asserting this, I am far from maintaining, or from even distantly implying, that *all* who believe this doctrine deny that Christ is God. On the contrary, I am of opinion that some who hold this view are as zealous as any in the belief of the real deity of Immanuel, as zealous in the defence of it. But it certainly led Biblicus to this denial, and I must confess that it appears to have too obvious a tendency that way. And after all that can be said in favour of the opinion, by way of remote inference and probable consequence, and nothing more than this seems even to be attempted, for no one direct text is ever once, by any writer on the point, cited in proof of it, that I have ever read, and I have read many, after all the ingenious things which have

been written in order to establish the sentiment, and no one who has read Dr. Watts upon the subject can deny that ingenious things have been written, still I must accede to the declaration, that, in divine subjects, where scripture has no voice, man should have no ear; that where God is silent, man should be dumb. As it appears no one single text can be found which asserts that the soul of our Lord did pre-exist, may it not be asked, how can we believe it? Can faith rest upon bare possibility, conjectural inference, and conceivable conclusion? Is this, can this be a sufficient foundation for the soul of man to build its creed upon? Is not the silence of scripture as expressive as its language, admonishing us, hitherto shalt thou go and no farther?

And here, as it is not my intention to pursue the pre-existent question

into minute detail, I might be forgiven if I left this part of the subject. But for the sake of some, whose eyes may glance over these pages, I would affectionately desire their consideration to these two simple points.

If the human soul created the worlds, it must have had *infinite wisdom*, but the soul of the infant Jesus *grew in wisdom*, as his body grew in stature, Luke ii. 52. how is this to be imagined of that pre-existent soul which formed the worlds? If the Word took a human soul into union with itself, before the foundation of the world, such an assumption of our nature into union with the divine, would have been the first great act of humiliation on the part of the Son of God; but where is there the slightest hint of any such humiliation in the word? In Phil. ii. 7, 8, 9. where the humiliation of the Saviour, in becoming man, is par-

ticularly insisted upon, where is there the remotest allusion to his humbling himself, in his assumption of a human soul, prior to his incarnation?

But my chief and most decided opposition to that volume, arises from its denial of the distinct personality of the Holy Ghost, and the proper deity of the Son of God. This appears to me not only a serious, but an awful error; that it was not a destructive one did not arise from the nature of the error itself. That which grieves and dishonours him, who is the very life of our spiritual existence, the very breath of our spiritual being; that which undermines the real dignity of the Saviour's person, and consequently the real dignity of the Saviour's work, must have the seeds of all destruction in it; and that it did *not* destroy, was the effect, and, may it never be forgotten by me, the *mere* effect, of that

grace of God, which delivereth his people from their destructions, Psalm cvii. 20.

Having now given a *general survey* of my book, the next three or four letters, I intend, shall unfold somewhat at length my views on the person of our Lord, and on the personality and deity of the Holy Ghost, with a *particular bearing* on the sentiments avowed in my former work. In the mean while, believe me,

My dear Sir,

Yours affectionately,

J. H. EVANS.

LETTER V.

Hampstead, July, 1826.

MY DEAR SIR,

I OBSERVED in my last letter, that my chief and most decided objection to my former views, in reference to the Son of God, arises from a conviction that the system denies his proper deity, which proper deity the word of truth so broadly maintains.

When I found myself repeatedly charged with a denial of the real deity of Christ, as I have before remarked, so awful did the charge appear, that I was led to review my system, and to compare it with the Word of God. This I did, at intervals, for about three years. It seems,

therefore, but the payment of a debt which I owe, if I particularly notice those texts which were the most deeply impressed upon my mind during that period, convincing me that Jesus was truly, properly, and in the highest sense, Jehovah and God.

And among these I know of no one passage which left so strong a conviction, altogether, as John i. 1. "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God." In this passage that which particularly and especially struck me, was not merely the assertion that the Word was God, but the Word as distinguished from the Father, and as so distinguished, declared to be God, as absolutely as the Father himself was declared to be God.

In reading this passage I could not but feel, that if any individual could have access to only one page of the

New Testament, and that one page had contained this first of John, that no doubt could possibly have entered his mind, if he were led to read it in simplicity of spirit, but that the Word was distinct from the Father, and yet was as truly and verily God as the Father himself. And hence I was led to infer how extremely improbable it must be considered, that an apostle, writing under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, should thus, in the very first chapter of his Gospel, and in the very first verse of that chapter, write that which was so calculated to mislead, if our Lord were not truly God, the whole Christian world, nay, what, on that supposition, has actually misled them, and helped to persuade them to worship and serve the creature as the Creator, who is blessed for evermore. I cannot adequately describe to you the effect

which this plain system of reasoning seemed to produce on me. It seemed like the bright rising of the sun, which displayed a thousand filmy threads which had been invisibly spread all around me, displayed them and dissolved. The real deity of the Word, the distinction between the Word and the Father, began once more to be clearly and obviously perceived.

Next to John i. 1. I think that Phil. ii. 4—11. was the most deeply impressed upon my mind. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a

man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." In considering the whole of this interesting portion of divine truth, I remarked especially these three points. *First*, that there was a manifest antithesis in the passage. Our Lord was "in fashion as a man," he was "in the form of God." But he was *truly* and *properly* man, and not merely man in name; so, by all fairness of reasoning, was he *truly* and *properly* God, and not merely God in name. *Secondly*, I was led to infer, that if our Lord had been in himself of a nature inferior to the Father, he must necessarily have thought it robbery, yea, the greatest of all robberies, to have made himself equal with the Father and to have taken from Jehovah, that glory which the law gives, and *exclusively* gives, to the One Supreme, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy

God, and *him only shalt thou serve.*" I reasoned thus, if the Lord Jesus Christ be in himself the man, though we allow, for argument's sake, that he be the man in whom the Father dwells, and be one with the Father, yet, as it regards himself, he is so far from being equal with the Father, that he is *inconceivably*, yea *infinitely* inferior to the Father. His real inferiority to the Father bears, on that view, no sort of comparison with our inferiority to himself. There is, indeed, a vast difference between a man so exalted, as he, on that scheme, is supposed to be, and a man so fallen as fallen man is; but although there be *great difference*, yet there is *some degree of proportion*. But between Jehovah and man there is *no degree of proportion*. It is *Infinity to nothing*. Touching his humanity, or rather his office as Mediator,

our Lord says, "My Father is greater than I." If, then, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, while the expression implies, indeed, that he had an inferior nature to the divine, it implies also that he had another nature, equally with the Father, namely, the divine. *Thirdly*, I observed that the apostle begins by exhorting the Philippians, with "look not every man *on his own things*, but every man also on the things of others, let *this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus* ; and then elucidates his meaning, by shewing *how* the Lord Jesus looked not upon his own things, namely, by divesting, or rather emptying himself (*εκενωσε*) of the external glory of the Godhead, while that which he did look upon, was the forlorn condition of the church given him to save. But the whole force of this

reasoning appeared to depend upon this glory of the Godhead being the glory of *his own* Godhead.

The conviction which these two passages produced, was established and confirmed by my observing, that not only was our Lord repeatedly called *Jehovah in the Old Testament*, which, indeed, I had never denied, although explaining it by his union with his Father, and so bearing his name, but that he is described as having *the very nature*, as well as the *name* of Jehovah.

Thus in Isaiah, “Behold the Lord God (clearly the Saviour, and not the Father, as by looking back to the third verse must appear; John the Baptist not being the fore-runner of the Father, personally considered, but of the Son, see Luke iii. 4, 5, 6. and John iii. 28.) will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him,

now a preposterous idea to suppose that it could be said of man, however upholden by and one with Jehovah, that all nations were before him as a drop of a bucket, when he, *in his own nature, was nothing more than man*; that by man the isles should be taken up as a very little thing; that man should sit upon the circle of the earth, encircle it, and count its inhabitants as grasshoppers, when *his own nature was, in reality, their nature.*

Much of this same sort of proof I met with elsewhere, maintaining Immanuel to be God *by nature* as well as *by name*. For instance, I saw that he was declared to be Omniscient, Jude 25. John. xvi. 30. Matt. xi. 27. xii. 25. John ii. 24, 25. Omnipotent, Isa. ix. 6. Col. i. 16, 17. Omnipresent, Matt. xxviii. 20. Immutable, Psalm cii. 27. Heb. xiii. 8. Eternal, Psalm cii. 26.

Heb. i. 8. xiii. 8. was set forth, in short, as having the attributes of God, as well as the name of God.

Nor should I omit that the consideration of the various epithets which are used, when the divinity of our Lord is spoken of, served greatly, under the blessing of God, to confute the idea of our Lord's being declared to be God from the indwelling of the Father; I saw that he was set forth as God over all,* Rom. ix. 5.; as the mighty God, Isa. ix. 6.; the true God,†

* *Επὶ πάντων*, over all, is an ascription of supreme deity to the Son, as is clear by comparing Eph. iv. 6. where the same words are ascribed to the Father.

† Jesus Christ is the last antecedent, therefore the true God refers to him. Besides, our Lord Jesus Christ is declared to be the eternal life, in the beginning of the chapter, 1 John i. 3; and as the true God and Eternal Life are here clearly predicated of the same being, therefore Jesus Christ, who is the Eternal Life, is the true

1 John v. 20.; the great God, Tit. ii. 13.; the only Lord God,* Jude 4.

I have thus briefly, my dear Sir, unfolded to you that train of thought by which I was led back to view the Son of God, not as the man one with the Father, and in whom he dwells, but as I first viewed him, when,

God also. Nor should it be forgotten, that as the Apostle John wrote this epistle against the Gnostics, who never denied the divinity of the Father, but who denied altogether the divinity of the Son, we are necessarily led to conclude, that when the solemn admonition was given, "This is the true God—keep yourselves from idols," it would not refer to the acknowledgment of a truth which they never denied, but rather to one which they actually rejected.

* The more literal translation of this and Tit. ii. 13. and 2 Pet. i. 1, 2. as G. Sharpe has, I conceive, fully demonstrated, should have been our only Master, God, and Lord, Jesus Christ; our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ; the righteousness of Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour, which last reading indeed the margin gives.

through the riches of God's grace and sovereign mercy, the eyes of my soul were directed towards him by the blessed and eternal Spirit, save only that I trust my soul discerns, with somewhat clearer light than at first, the glory of his person and the perfection of his work. I view him, although my soul be lost in the contemplation, as Jehovah Jesus, God over all, the man, Jehovah's fellow.

Although I wrote ignorantly what I did write concerning him, said ignorantly what I did say, without any conviction that I was writing aught or speaking aught against him, who was, and who is, all the hope of my soul; although I wonder and stand amazed at the gentle way by which he has led me back to that truth, which, in the spring-time of my spiritual life, formed so green and sweet a pasture to my soul; yet must I re-

member, and be confounded, and never open my mouth but in confession, and prayer, and thanksgiving, because of my shame, however I may believe that he is pacified towards me for all that I have done.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours affectionately,

J. H. EVANS.

LETTER VI.

Hampstead, July, 1826.

MY DEAR SIR,

You are aware that the answer which Biblicus would give to the sort of proof adduced in the last letter would be, that the Saviour is declared to be Jehovah and God, from his union with the Father, and the indwelling of the Father.

But to this it must be replied, that if the Saviour have, in reality, no divine nature, that is, if he be not in himself truly Jehovah, then is he declared to be what he is not. Because no indwelling of Jehovah, in one who is of a nature inferior to Jehovah, can deify that inferior nature.

When Biblicus asserts, therefore, that the angel is God of Bethel and is Jehovah of hosts, because Jehovah of hosts and God of Bethel is in that angel, and one with that angel, he asserts that which he can never prove to be true. For if the Lord Jesus Christ be but the man in whom the Father dwells, and with whom the Father is united, no indwelling of the Father in the man can alter, however it may exalt, the nature of the man, for then man would cease to be man. The humanity still remains the humanity, and is the humanity of Jesus; but the Godhead is the Father, who is evidently not Jesus. On that supposition, indeed, the Lord Jesus Christ may bear the name of God, the name of Jehovah, but is not, cannot be God and Jehovah. If he were, then man, by the indwelling of, and by union with Deity, would cease to be man,

and would become God, that is, finite would become infinite, dependent would become independent, the creature would become uncreate, which is self-contradicting and impossible.

If the person of our Lord be on that scheme *complex*, that is, if he be God and man in one Christ, then is God the Father and the man Christ Jesus the person of the Mediator, which presents nothing but confusion, the Mediator mediating with himself, the way to himself, making atonement to himself, interceding with himself.

If the person of our Lord be on that scheme *simple*, then, as the Son is not the Father, so must he be simply a man, and as no indwelling of the Father in the man alters the nature of the man, his Godhead is denied altogether.

If any one, whose mind may be at all wavering on the subject, may be

led to read these pages, I would affectionately desire such an one to consider the above plain reasoning. I confess, that simple as the materials of this lever may appear to be, it completely lifted up the whole of my building, and overturned it.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours truly,

J. H. EVANS.

LETTER VII.

Hampstead, July, 1826.

MY DEAR SIR,

HAVING shewn you my reasons for asserting generally that the indwelling scheme denies the deity of the Son of God, and must therefore be unscriptural, I shall now attempt to pursue the subject into its more minute detail.

The word of truth asserts that the Saviour is Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Immutable, and Eternal. If the indwelling scheme, therefore, denies that he is possessed of these perfections, it can never be true.

The Saviour is declared to be *Omnipotent*—as he *for whom* were all things created, Col. i. 16., can be no

less than God himself, no creature being capable of bearing such dignity and glory, it is "*the Lord* hath made all things *for himself*," Prov. xvi. 4., and only "*the Lord*." So he, *by whom* were all things created, and *by whom* they still consist, Col. i. 17., must be Omnipotent. Can he that stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing; who bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them—Can he that holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it—who compasseth the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end—before whom the pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof—who divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud—Can such an one, I would ask, be any

thing less than the Omnipotent? Lo, these are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand? Job xxvi. 7—14.

Here the unsatisfactoriness of the indwelling scheme must be felt. For when it is declared that it was God the Father who created the worlds, but that he created them by his Son, the man Christ Jesus, in whom he dwells, and with whom he is one, for which Heb. i. 1, 2. is quoted, it was forgotten by Biblicus, that if by the Son is meant the man, and nothing but the man, for as before has been often said, no indwelling or union of the Father changes, although it must greatly exalt, the nature of the man, the man still remaining the man, and nothing but the man, it was forgotten, I repeat, upon this scheme, that the Son *was denied to be the Creator at all.*

For man can as possibly be Omnipotent as he can be Omnipresent or self-existent. And, as it would be inadmissible by all parties to say that man is self-existent, or Omnipresent, so is it equally so to say, that man is Omnipotent. He "which is, which was, and which is to come, is the Almighty," Rev. i. 8., and no one else. And if the creation of the world required Almighty power, the man not having it could not exercise it.

I am aware that Biblicus has asserted, as in answer to this, that all power was given to the Son, Matt. xxviii. 18., and that having all power given him, he exercised it in the creation and upholding of the world. But to say nothing of what I must conceive to be the misapplication of that text, which appears to refer to the kingly office of the Mediator, and to Messiah's rule over all the nations

of the earth, and to be the fulfilment of such passages as "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession," Psal. ii. 8.—"And he said, it is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth," Isaiah, xlix. 6.; to say nothing of this, such a mode of interpretation supposes that the perfections of Deity are communicable, which is, in reality, to deny God to be God, and the creature to be the creature. If Omnipotence be predicable of impotence, eternity of a being of a moment, self-existence of derived existence, and independence in all things of him who is dependent for all things, our

ideas of God are altogether vague and unsettled. If, in consequence of union with and the indwelling of the Father in the man, *one* divine perfection be communicated to the man, then why not *every* divine perfection—why may not he who is *finite*, which is the greatest, perhaps, of contradictions, be also *infinite*? God the Father created the worlds by his Son, but that is by one, who, as the Word, truly God, is infinite in power, and *no one else could create them*.

I am fully aware that Biblicus would cite, "The Son can do nothing of himself, I can of mine own self do nothing," John v. 19. 30., to prove an inferiority of nature. But if our Lord was really *the servant* of the covenant, and really thus made himself of no reputation, is not the expression entirely adapted to his humiliating condition? When the Jews

considered the assertion, that God was his Father, infringed upon the divine glory, it was his desire to shew them, that although he was indeed the Son of God by nature, he was now the servant of God by office, and, as such, could do nothing of himself, in his own name, and by his own authority; that, instead of *opposing* the will of him whom they avowed to be their God, he came in his very name, was sent by him to *do* his will, to finish his work, to glorify his perfections.

I am, my dear Sir, not entirely ignorant how much the reading of a text is very often influenced by some previous chain of thought, which in a manner pre-determines the interpretation. But it is humbly and affectionately submitted to the candid enquirer, whether the above view of these and similar passages does not seem far more easy and simple, than

that which supposes *a man* to become possessed of divine perfections, *a man* to judge the world, *a man* to be honoured even as we honour the Father, that is, for a being of yesterday to be honoured as the one supreme God, when the law forbids me to worship and serve any one but the one supreme God.

The Lord Jesus Christ is *Omniscient*, Jude 25.* Rev. ii. 23. John xxi. 17. But, as man, he knew not of that day, when he himself should come, Mark xiii. 32. as man he increased in wisdom. Luke ii. 52. But Peter, unrebuked, uncensured of his Lord, says to him, "Lord, thou knowest all things." If he were not God as well

* The only wise God, our Saviour, is he who, in the preceding verse, is to present his church faultless. But who is this? The Lord Jesus Christ, Eph. v. 27. who is therefore the only wise God our Saviour.

as man, this would not, could not be true. The indwelling scheme is here, too, found inconsistent with the truth of God, and with itself. For while it contends earnestly on the one hand for the deity of the Son, in consequence of union with the Father, it contends as earnestly that Christ, although God, does not know when his own coming shall be. If there be no nature in Christ which knew all things, it is quite impossible that he could be God; and if there be, then, as according to that view that nature is the Father, the doctrine is entirely Sabellian, for then Christ is the Father manifest in the flesh.

When we read, "No one (*ουδεις*) knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any one the Father save the Son;" Matt. xi. 27. is this, can this be understood of the man who grew in wisdom as he grew in

stature? Must we not understand it of an higher, superior, yea, of a divine nature?

The Lord Jesus Christ is also *Omnipresent*. Matt. xxviii. 20. But how is he this, how *can* he be this, on the indwelling scheme? It is contended that he is so from the indwelling of the Father in the humanity. But no indwelling of the Father in the humanity will make the humanity omnipresent. Man, in order to be omnipresent, must cease to be man. The indwelling of the Father in the Son could never lead the Son to say, "*I am with you always.*" If it could, then have we the Sabellian doctrine again; for the Father is manifestly confounded with the Son. The words clearly declare that the *Son* shall himself be personally present with the saints to the end of time. If the Son be nothing but the man in whom the

Father dwells, and with whom he is united, he cannot be so present. As man he is at the right hand of the Father, where Stephen saw him, Acts vii. 55, 56, and omnipresence cannot be predicated of man. "If any man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and *we* will come unto him, and make our abode with him," John xiv. 23. This passage most unequivocally marks the distinction between the Father and the Son. It as unequivocally asserts that both will come and dwell in the hearts of the saints. But how can this be maintained if the Son has not a divine nature as well as the Father?

The indwelling scheme also denies the *Immutability* of the Son of God. Immutability can only be predicated of God. It is his perfection—it is his nature—it is himself. But this is predicated of the Saviour, "O my

God, take me not away in the midst of my days : thy years are throughout all generations, of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure ; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art *the same*, and thy years shall have no end." Psalm cii. 24—27. He who is here addressed is Jehovah, but in Heb. i. 10, 11, 12, all this is applied to the Saviour. But what does the indwelling scheme say to it? Clearly it denies it altogether. How can he be *the same* as he was, when he is now, and he was not? How can a being of yesterday, upholden every moment by the infinite power of another, be immutably the same? Sameness of being is only true of the true God.

The word of truth also asserts his *Eternal existence* in John viii. 58. "Before Abraham was I am." In this interpretation of these words, our commentators shall be neither Calvin, nor Beza, nor Gill, nor Henry, nor Scott, but *the Jews themselves*. Of the language which our Lord spake, the Jews must be allowed to have been the most competent judges; with its idiom and peculiar phraseology they must be confessed to have been best acquainted. But what meaning did *they* attach to his words, when he had said, "Before Abraham was I am," they took up stones to stone him for his blasphemy. But what blasphemy could they have laid to his charge, if they had not considered that he had been assuming to himself the very name of Jehovah? Ex. iii. 4. that very name which declares his eternal existence? "Thou art from

everlasting," says the Psalmist, evidently speaking of the Messiah; compare Psalm xciii. 25. Heb. i. 10—12. Psalm xc. 2. and Micah v. 2. "Jesus Christ *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*" Heb. xiii. 8.

But the indwelling scheme denies his eternal existence altogether, he being in himself the man in whom Jehovah dwells, and with whom he has united himself, and nothing but the man; he was but of *yesterday*, and if the power that upholds him were to be removed, he would not be *to-morrow*. Jesus, it is true, as man, has a nature that has its life from the Father, and which he lays down at the command of the Father; he has also, as mediator, all fulness of life treasured up in him by the Father, for his church and people, in which sense we must understand such passages as "For as the Father hath life

in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself," the passage alluding, as the context proves, to Jesus, as the great Head of spiritual life to all his seed, and not to his own existence. But when we read "I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore," Rev. i. 11. and compare it with Isa. xlv. 6. we can have no difficulty in assigning to him his real glory, and saying, From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.

The indwelling scheme then really denies Immanuel to be truly and properly God. It denies him to be Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Immutable, Eternal. The Scriptures assert that he is all this. The indwelling scheme, I infer, therefore, can never be true.

In my next I shall conclude the

subject as it regards the person of the Lord, by endeavouring to shew the great importance of the subject on which I am writing. In the mean time,

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours truly,

J. H. EVANS.

LETTER VIII.

Hampstead, July, 1826.

MY DEAR SIR,

HAVING endeavoured to shew that the indwelling scheme is untenable and unscriptural in its principles, I would now prove that it is a system most dangerous in its consequences.

The Lord Jesus Christ is manifestly the object of divine worship. Thomas fell down before him with My Lord and my God, John xx. 28. Stephen adored him, Acts vii. 59, 60. Paul besought him, 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. The angels worship him, Heb. i. 6. The saints on earth supplicate him, 1 Cor. i. 2. The saints in glory praise and bless him for ever.

But the indwelling scheme, in speaking of Jesus as the man in whom the Father dwells, and with whom the Father is united, and teaching us, at the same time, to worship him as if he were God, seems to lead the soul to the worship of a false God. To give to a man, although that man be ever so highly exalted, the worship due only to the Supreme Being, has an atheistical tendency, inasmuch as it serves to confound our ideas of God altogether, to worship one who is finite as the infinite, one who is dependent as the independent, a being of yesterday as the eternal, the creature as the creator. It makes the gospel oppose the law, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," Matt. iv. 10. I am aware that Biblicus would say, we are to worship Christ to the glory of God the Father, for which Phil. ii. 10, 11.

would be quoted by him; but the glory of Christ there spoken of by the apostle, is clearly his mediatorial glory as Saviour, and not his essential glory as God, and *hence the expression, to the glory of God the Father.* The whole work of the Saviour being to the glory of the Father, see John xvii. 4, they that bow the knee to the Saviour, must do it to the glory of the Father. But waiving this, the question still recurs, how could any man bow the knee to Christ *at all*, worship him *at all*, serve him *at all*, if he were not truly God, *as long as the command of the gospel does not stand opposed to the command of the law?* “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and *him only* shalt thou serve.” The indwelling scheme, therefore, either gives to Christ an inferior worship, or in giving him worship

equally with the Father, it opposes the gospel to the law.

As to inferior worship, this, in fact, gives the Lord Jesus Christ no real worship as God; and if it be said, as has been said, by some, I worship the Father in the man Christ Jesus, this is in fact, *not to worship Christ at all.*

The indwelling scheme is most dangerous in its consequences, as it bears upon the humiliation of the Son of God. All our views of the humiliation of the Saviour entirely depend on our views of his person. If Jesus be Jehovah, his glory is infinite; then for him to humble himself to take our nature upon him, was infinite humiliation. If Jesus be not Jehovah, as his glory was only finite, his humiliation must be finite also. For a man, who had pre-existent glory in and with the Father, allowing for the sake of

argument that it was so, for him voluntarily to part with that glory for a season, might be in some sense humiliation; but it must be, it can only be the humiliation of a creature, and comparatively nothing. There would be more condescension in one look of pity from Jehovah, upon a poor, miserable, wretched sinner, than in all the bitterest and most direful sufferings of such an one, yea, than if every angel and arch-angel in heaven were to endure every curse for that sinner, and that throughout eternity. What humiliation then must it have been for Jehovah to have taken the nature of that sinner into union with himself, yea, to have endured the curse for that sinner. This is indeed infinite humiliation, infinite as his glory. But all this the indwelling scheme takes from the Saviour, and therefore is in the highest sense derogatory to his real

dignity; the dignity of his person being sunk by it, the dignity of his work has necessarily sunk also.

But this leads to the consideration of another consequence, that which regards the efficacy of his salvation. If Jesus be God, then, voluntarily assuming a nature inferior to his own nature, he voluntarily placed himself under the law, and being, in his divine nature, infinitely above the law, he could properly *merit* salvation for others. But the indwelling scheme virtually undermines both these considerations. Being, according to that view, nothing but man, he could not be said to place himself *voluntarily* under the divine law; for every creature, however high and exalted, is *necessarily* under that law. The law of Jehovah binds all creation, it ranges over heaven and earth, and even hell itself. Every thing created, as it has

received all from the Creator, so it owes all to the Creator, and must give all to the Creator, or endure the penalty. Every thing the creature is, every thing the creature has, every thing the creature can do, he owes to God. The pre-existent human soul of Christ, allowing that which is not proved, is and must be as much a creature as any other thing, or being created; as such it must have been necessarily under the law which binds the creature to the Creator; and being so, when an opportunity presented itself of doing the will of God, in reference to the salvation of man, it was obliged by the law to do all that will. The voluntary placing himself under the law is entirely denied, therefore, by the indwelling scheme. Neither could the Saviour merit ought for others on that system, for he could have nothing to spare. The law de-

manded all that he could do for himself. It allows of no acts of supererogation for any that are under it. It takes all that they are, all that they have, all that they can do, and gives them nothing back; it demands all for God.

If the Lord Jesus Christ be but a creature, and the indwelling scheme cannot raise him to any thing else; maintaining, however, that he is, in some sense, although it does not very accurately define in what sense, one with God, and upholden by God; how can a creature who is himself upholden, uphold all creation? how can he maintain the spiritual life of all his spiritual seed, who needs his own life to be maintained by another? how can he keep others, who is himself a poor dependent? for such every creature is, and must be, and needs to be kept every moment.

Besides, if the malignity of sin must ever be in proportion to the ingratitude that leads to its commission; if the ingratitude must ever be in proportion to the mercies conferred, then man's sin must have an infinite malignity in it, and as such it requires an infinite worth in the Saviour's work to give redemption from the curse, and a title to the blessing. But if the righteousness of the Saviour have not an infinite dignity, and in his blood an infinite value, how are we to appear before God?

The whole doctrine of the atonement depends upon the Surety being in himself of sufficient dignity to pay the whole debt. If a man owes me fifty pounds, and he cannot pay me, and some friend engages to discharge the debt, but he cannot pay me, I give him the fifty pounds, but is this

to pay me? The church owes an infinite debt, but cannot pay it; Christ engages to discharge the debt; but because, upon the indwelling scheme, he is unable, as a creature, to pay an infinite debt, the Father gives his own merit to the Son, and then the debt is paid, that is, the Father merits the salvation of his elect, but *is* this, *can* this be the payment of the debt, how is justice *thus* satisfied? How is Jesus *the Saviour*, on this scheme? The soul as necessarily goes off from him to the Father, in the article of salvation, on this view, as from the shadow to the substance.

The saint of God wants infinite merit to atone for him as well as infinite power to defend him, infinite wisdom to guide him, and infinite patience to bear with him. *The indwelling scheme unfolds no such Saviour*, and can

therefore never present such an one
as the sinner's case and circumstances
demand.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours affectionately,

J. H. EVANS.

LETTER IX.

Hampstead, July, 1826.

MY DEAR SIR,

HAVING given you my reasons for rejecting the indwelling scheme, inasmuch as it denies, what the scripture maintains, the real and proper deity of the Son of God. I now proceed to the consideration of the personality and deity of the Holy Ghost.

And as, in the preceding letter, I satisfied myself with bringing forward those portions of divine truth which were laid with the greatest weight upon my own mind, without attempting to adduce, what even myself could

have adduced, in farther proof of the deity of our blessed Immanuel, I would pursue the same course with regard to my views of the Holy Spirit. My object being, as I have already stated, not to send you a treatise on the subject, but simply to disclose the way by which I was led back again to a conviction of that part of truth which I once denied.

The order which I shall observe in the arrangement of the subject, in this and the following letter, will be the same as that which took place in my own mind, beginning first with the personality of the Holy Spirit, then advancing to his personality distinct from the Father, and then to an acknowledgment of his personal deity.

You are aware that what was denied in the Dialogues by Biblicus, was the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit. He does not deny the necessity, the

absolute, indispensable necessity of the convincing, converting, comforting, sanctifying work of the Spirit upon the soul, with the Socinian. Neither does he esteem the Spirit to be some created being, emanating from Jehovah, with the Arian. But his system was, that the convincing of the Spirit was the Father convincing by his Spirit, the drawing of the Spirit was the Father drawing by his Spirit, the sanctification of the Spirit was the Father sanctifying by his Spirit. What he meant by "the Spirit" is not indeed very clear and obvious; sometimes he speaks of the Holy Ghost as the unction of God, sometimes as the power, sometimes as the influence of God; at others, as if the Spirit were the Father himself. In short, Biblicus did not deny the actual need of spiritual influence upon the soul, in order to salvation, but

he denied the distinct personality of the Spirit of God.

He had, in this part of the subject, fallen into those views of truth which are usually termed Sabellian.

In recalling to my own mind the way by which I was led to the conviction that these views were opposed to truth, I observe that my steps were very slow. Long after I had given up the indwelling scheme, these mistaken notions on the personality of the Holy Spirit still entangled and perplexed me. The reason of this is, however, obvious. I had never intentionally denied that Jesus was God. Contradicted as the assertion was, by the whole substance of my book, yet my words were, "the writer maintains that Christ is God, nay, as he thinks, proves that he is God, far more clearly than the Trinitarian can do;" and they were my honest words.

I wrote as I thought, but I thought erroneously. The error, the sin of the error, is my own—the grace which kept me from the destructiveness of the error is God's, and to him be all the glory. When, therefore, I was brought to see that the indwelling scheme denied Jesus to be God, that conviction shook it, as it were, to its very foundation. And my after investigation served only to demolish the fabric, and level it with the ground.

But with regard to the distinct personality of the Holy Ghost, that I really denied. And the conviction of my error was proportionably slow.

I had been confused on the subject of the personality of the Holy Ghost, by a very specious, but, as my after consideration has proved it to be, by a very superficial argument. The argument is this. That as things ma-

nifestly impersonal were often personified in the Scriptures, the personification of the Holy Spirit can never prove that the Holy Spirit is a person. In this argument there is, it must be confessed, an apparent fairness as to the premises, and much seeming certainty as to the conclusion. But the light of divine truth at length manifested the premises to be erroneous, and therefore the conclusion to be false.

Dr. Wardlaw was, on this particular point, made of real blessing to me, through the tender mercy of God. The answer which he gives to this difficulty, and I really believe that it forms a difficulty with some real and sincere inquirers in divine things, is a very simple, and such is the simplicity of truth when really brought before the mind, a very obvious one. "We ought to recollect, that, while with regard to the Holy Spirit, the ordinary cur-

rent phraseology of the Scriptures is framed on the supposition of his personality; this is not the case respecting any thing else, which, although occasionally personified, is not a person. In other cases, the language of personification is the exception to the general phraseology. But in this case, it is quite the reverse; any expressions that seem inconsistent with the idea of personality form the exception; the general complexion of the language being all in its favour."*

Thus, for instance, we find that once or twice the law is personified, that in one chapter charity is personified, that now and then Jordan is personified, that the sun is sometimes said to run a race, the earth to mourn, the vallies to sing, a pillar to bear witness, and stones to cry out, but

* Wardlaw on Socinian Controversy, page 289. Third Edition.

that, by incalculably the greatest number of instances, all these are impersonified. But when I compared the Scripture phraseology in reference to the Holy Ghost, I saw that He was characterized as a person, not merely by personal pronouns, personal names, but by personal feelings, personal acts, in a word, by every mode which could constitute a person.

I remarked that the Spirit was set forth as *speaking*, Acts xii. 2.; as *forbidding*, Acts xvi. 6, 7.; as *approving*, Acts xv. 28.; as *witnessing*, Rom. viii. 16.; as *interceding*, viii. 26.; as *groaning*, 26.; as *helping the saints*, 26.; as *sealing*, Eph. i. 13.

I perceived that the Holy Ghost was described as not speaking *of himself*, that is, by his own authority, but *as a servant* sent by the Father, John xvi. 13.; the very same thing being said of Jesus, a servant, and a

person, John xiv. 10.; as *a comforter*, John xv. 26.; as *another comforter*, the other being manifestly a person, John xiv. 16.; as the Spirit of God, who is contradistinguished from the spirit, manifestly a person, the prince of the devils,* Matt. xii. 27, 28.; the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience, Eph. ii. 2.

I read of the *mind* of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 27.; of his *will*, 1 Cor. xii. 11.; of his *power*, Rom. xv. 13.;

* This view of the Holy Spirit, as contradistinguished from the evil spirit, and that evil spirit manifestly a person, was much and deeply impressed upon my mind. I perceived that the spirit of darkness was one who could feel, think, and consciously act, a conscious intelligent agent, and this seemed to remove an unfounded objection against the term person—a term which, while it is unable, perhaps, fully to express our idea, yet, as marking the distinction between an active principle and a real and proper agent, is, nevertheless, I conceive, fitly and suitably used.

of his *love*, xv. 30.; of his *grief*, Eph. iv. 30.

I saw that we were *baptized into his name*, Matt. xxviii. 19.; that we can *blaspheme him*, and *speak against him*, Matt. xii. 31, 32.; that we can *lie to him*, and *tempt him*, Acts v. 3, 4.; and, in a sense, *resist him*, Acts vii. 51.

If I were to select, among all this body of proof, that the Holy Spirit was not a mere influence, power, or principle, but a conscious, intelligent agent, that which more decidedly settled my mind, it was the consideration of the Spirit as *interceding with the Father for the saints*, Rom. viii. 27. This appeared so directly and obviously a personal act, that all opposition to the acknowledgment of him as a person, seemed completely silenced. The Saviour in that same chapter, you remark, is, ver. 34., *ὁς ἐντοχάρει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν*, but the Holy Spirit also, in

ver. 27., *εντυγχανει υπερ αγων*, the very same expression. Is intercession or advocacy, a personal act as it regards the Saviour? so is it, by all fairness of interpretation, as it regards the Holy Ghost. When I remembered too, that he is called, *αλλον Παρακλητον*, another Comforter, or Advocate, John xiv. 16., the conclusion seemed irresistible.

Nor ought I to omit the impression which Matt. xxviii. 19. "Go ye into all the world, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," made upon me. To baptize the disciples of Christ in the name of the one true and living God, of the man Christ Jesus, who, although one with the true and living God, according to the indwelling scheme, yet is a creature and nothing but a creature, and in the name of the influence of the Father and the Son,

seemed an insurmountable difficulty. I could not but feel, that as the Father and the Son were manifestly persons, so from that passage alone would it appear, that the Holy Ghost was a person also.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours most truly,

J. H. EVANS.

LETTER X.

Hampstead, August, 1826.

MY DEAR SIR,

It offered no solid objection, in my mind, to the proof of the real personality of the Holy Ghost, brought forward in the preceding letter, for me to observe that many things were predicated of the Holy Spirit, which could not be, strictly speaking, applicable to a person; because I saw that the same was true of One, whose personality was never doubted. Our Lord was said to be a "*door*" by which we are to enter, John x. 9.; to be *food*, which we are to eat, John vi. 57.; to be *a garment*, we are to put on, Rom. xiii. 14.; and all this

without in the least degree infringing on his proper personality. I could not, therefore, but conclude, that the Holy Spirit's being represented as *water*, as *oil*, as being *poured out*, and *shed forth*, was without infringing in the least degree on *his* proper personality, supposing that personality to have been satisfactorily proved in other parts of the sacred record.

My mind thus becoming satisfied that the Holy Spirit was a personal agent, my next enquiry was, whether, as a person, he was *distinct from the Father*. And here Rom. viii. 27. gave, under the divine blessing, complete conviction to my mind. "He that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God."

I felt that if any one thing were ascribed to the Holy Spirit as a per-

son, which could not be assigned to the Father, a distinct personality would necessarily be proved. And in this verse I clearly discerned such a distinction. For the Holy Spirit is there represented as making intercession for the saints *with the Father*. Here then was a manifest distinction, distinction from the Father *with whom* he pleads, from the saints *for whom* he pleads. And that he is distinguished from the Son, on the ground of whose finished work he pleads, was as evident, by comparing John xiv. 16., in which he is called another Comforter or Advocate.

This was solid ground to rest upon. And the more I look at it, the more solid does it appear. Here was not only a personal act, an act in which no one but a person could be really engaged, but here was the act of one who must be personally distinct from

the Father, and that, because he intercedes with the Father.

It would be impossible here to say, it is the Father interceding, for if so, the Father would intercede with himself. When such a text as "Through him we have access by one spirit unto the Father," Eph. ii. 18., is quoted, it is possible that it may be replied, The Father draws, John vi. 44., by his spirit, through Christ, unto himself. But here such a mode of interpretation is impossible. Here is the Spirit interceding in the saints with the Father—distinct from those *for whom*, and from him *with whom* he pleads.

I cannot describe to you the quiet satisfaction with which that verse was applied to my mind. It was a sort of clue-line, which seemed to lead me through all the mazes of the Sabellian system. Even the view of the personality of the Spirit had failed to

settle my mind ; it was the perception of the distinct personality which, under God, grounded and established my conviction.

You will agree with me, my dear Sir, that there is no accounting, upon mere rational grounds, for the strong impression which one portion of the word leaves upon us, at different periods of our life. This verse may not appear to you particularly convincing ; but to myself, the degree of conviction which it then produced, and now produces, is near a-kin to demonstration itself. Many texts might be adduced by me, as bearing upon the question. And, although they did not settle my own mind in the first place, neither is it in the power of any text, but as applied by the Spirit of truth, to lead to any such an effect ; yet they have appeared to me as decisively satisfactory,

clearly marking the distinction between the Father and the Holy Spirit; such as, the Father's sending the Spirit, John xiv. 26.; the Spirit's leading to the Father, Eph. ii. 18.; being baptized in the name of the Spirit, as well as of the Father, Matt. xxviii. 19.; the communion of the Holy Ghost being prayed for, as well as the love of the Father, 2 Cor. xiii. 14.; the Holy Spirit's dividing to every man severally as he will, as well as the Father, 1 Cor. xii. 11.

With regard to my conviction of the deity of the Holy Ghost, or that he is really and properly God, I would observe, that his proper distinct personality being proved, his proper deity followed, in my mind, of course. I had never, you are aware, considered the Holy Spirit as the Arian does, as a creature, or, at least, as a being inferior to the true God, but as

the power of God in the believer, or as God influencing the soul by some spiritual divine power. My conviction of the state of a sinner, in his unconverted condition, and of the believer, in his state of grace, never allowed me to look to any thing short of deity, short of God himself, for the supply of his need. The work I deeply felt infinitely exceeded the narrow limit of all created power. *Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence*, were all needed to its accomplishment. I wanted God himself to convince, convert, and sanctify the soul. But my error was, that I looked only to the Father for all this, denying the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit. When, therefore, the personal distinction between the Father and the Spirit was established in my mind, the personal deity of the latter was established of course.

If I had supposed that the Holy Ghost was some minor created being, emanating from the Father, I should have been met by the consideration, that what could only be predicated of the true God was predicated of the Spirit: such as, *Eternity*, Heb. ix. 14., *Omniscience*, 1 Cor. ii. 9—11., *Omnipresence*, Psalm cxxxix. 7., *Omnipotence*, Rom. xv. 18, 19., *Sovereignty*, 1 Cor. xii. 11. I should have felt that our *being baptized into his name*, a solemn act of worship,* Matt. xxviii.

* Biblicus lays no little stress upon the consideration that *no* instance of the worship of the Spirit can be found in the Bible. But he should rather have said, that such instances are *sparingly* to be found; the assertion that no such instance is to be met with is not correct. Being baptized into the name of the Spirit is an evident act of the most solemn worship, for it acknowledges him to be truly and verily God.

Why, indeed, such instances are not oftener to be met with, is a question in which we may be very soon bewildered, a depth in which we may

19.; *his authoritative command to the church at Antioch*, "The Holy Ghost

be very soon lost. One may feel certain, however, that there has not been a forgetfulness, in this respect, of our very infirmities, nor that our capacities are poor, bounded, imperfect—that a God of infinite tenderness and wisdom has, in short, remembered that we are *but dust*. I cannot also but add, that there is something in the very economy of salvation, that seems to prepare the mind for the comparatively rare occurrence of the worship of the Holy Ghost. *The Father* is therein set forth as that Person in the Godhead to whom prayer and praise are principally and especially, though *not exclusively*, to be offered through the atoning sacrifice of his dear Son, Eph. i. 16. 17., iii. 14., Col. i. 3, 4. *The Son* is therein manifested as that divine person, truly God and truly man, *through whom*, as the Advocate and Mediator of the covenant, we approach the Father, and who is, therefore, for the most part, although still with many exceptions, worshipped in his mediatorial glory, Rev. v. 12, 13., to the glory of God the Father. *The Holy Ghost* is spoken of as that person in the Godhead *by whom* we draw near to the Father, through the Son, Eph. ii. 18.; who intercedes *in us*, dictates all the real worship of our souls—the very breath,

said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work, whereunto I have called them," Acts xiii. 2.; *our being his*

life, and substance, of all our spiritual adoration and homage.

I will confess, then, that this very view of the economy of salvation, necessarily, to my own apprehension, leads me to expect that in comparatively few instances the Holy Ghost will be propounded, directly and distinctly, as an object of worship. For occasional prayer and aspiration to the Spirit, the conduct of the church in the Song of Solomon, Rev. i. 4., 2 Cor. xiii. 14., will give me a sufficient warrant: but still, the general current of Scripture must direct me to the Father, through the blood and righteousness of his dear Son.

As to the worship of the Spirit, with regard to multiplicity of proof, I would observe, that *the unity of Jehovah* is certainly the ground-work of all religion; and yet, let it be remarked, that in the Pentateuch, or the five books of Moses, which was the whole of revelation to the Jews in the days of Moses, I am not aware that this truth is broadly and explicitly stated more than *once*, Deut. vi. 4. So little connection has the reality of a truth, with the frequent recurrence of its proof.

temple, and thus the temple of God, 1 Cor. iii. 17., vi. 19.; *his being blasphemed and sinned against as God,* Acts v. 4.; *his being solemnly invoked by the church,* Cant. iv. 16.; *and his being joined with the Father and the Son, in the solemn benediction of the Apostle,* 2 Cor. xiii. 14., Rev. i. 4.; would have presented an insuperable difficulty, and prevented my approach towards any such conclusion. But as it was his distinct personality which was denied, when the cloud as to that point was removed from my mind, the glory of his personal deity, in oneness of essence with the Father and the Son, was instantly perceived and felt.

I have, then, my dear Sir, briefly unfolded to you, the track which I have been permitted to pursue, and the steps by which I have been graciously led to retrace my way, in reference to the personal deity of the

Holy Ghost. Personally distinct from the Father and the Son, and yet essentially one with the Father and the Son, my soul acknowledges this blessed Comforter as, in the truest sense, God. With abasement and humiliation of mind, I feel that in denying his distinct personality, I denied his real glory. In his infinite patience, pity, and forbearance, he bare with me, for he is God and not man. And to Him, with the Father and the Son, I would now ascribe equal and undivided glory, now and for ever.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours affectionately,

J. H. EVANS.

LETTER XI.

Hampstead, August, 1826.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE, in my preceding letters, gone over the main and principal ground, that which appeared to myself at least the most important, namely, the disavowal of those opinions contained in my book, which I consider to be opposed to the truth, and the acknowledgment of those which I believe to have their solid foundation in the word of him that cannot lie.

Still, however, there seems to be a path before me, which I ought not to turn from, a path which the word, and my own conscience, tell me I

ought to pursue; I mean the declaring my sentiments on the subject of the personal sanctification of the believer by the Spirit of holiness.

This is a subject upon which I the more readily enter, because, in the course of my life, I have not been without the charge of a denial of the necessity of such sanctification, in order to the present and final happiness of the child of God.

A charge of this kind, so grave, so solemn in its nature, so awfully serious in its consequences, demands, I conceive, a direct and full explanation on my own part, and I therefore most willingly give it.

It is scarcely needful, I trust, to assure yourself, in the first place, that I cordially and explicitly disavow such a sentiment altogether, and say that such a sentiment neither is held, nor ever has been held by me, at any

period, since I made the least profession of the truths of the Gospel.

While, however, I assert this, and I assert it in the broadest sense of which the words are capable, I will mention the probable causes which may have given birth to such an accusation.

When I came to London in 1816, the doctrine of justification or the believer's pardon and entire acceptance in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, was certainly that doctrine to which the peculiar circumstances of my own spiritual state more immediately led me. You are conscious, my dear Sir, that when for many previous years the burthened soul has been seeking deliverance and rest, when duty after duty has been attempted, book after book, sermon after sermon, has been read, when the Bible itself has been carefully, and

even prayerfully searched, and yet no quietness in the way of acceptance has been enjoyed, and the Eternal Spirit is pleased to unfold, by a discovery of the righteousness of Immanuel, of the freeness and suitableness of his great salvation, the way of deliverance and peace, and to bring the soul to walk in that way, that it excites but little wonder, although it may much after regret, that such a discovery should for a time too exclusively occupy the attention. This was precisely my own case and circumstances.

When it pleased the Lord, in his sovereign grace and mercy, to give me some sight and sense, I trust, of my lost and ruined state as a sinner, it did not please him to give me, at the same time, much, if any perception of the freeness and perfection of his great salvation. I saw, with many

others, the nature of the disease, but very little of the nature of the remedy. I felt something of the anguish of the wound, but knew very slightly, even in theory, and still less in experience, the application of the healing balm. But when this was graciously revealed, and the Comforter took of the things of Christ, and applied them in a degree to the conscience, gladness and joy were the blessed effects, and I hope I may add, in some small measure, love and childlike obedience followed. If such a state of mind has its blessings, it has its dangers also, and so I found it. Acceptance was the principal subject which occupied my mind, and as I felt, so I preached; acceptance was the principal subject which occupied my pulpit. The sanctification of a believer was not denied; it was maintained, it was pressed and insisted on, but I am free to confess that it did not take that

prominent standing, nor assume that prominent feature in my ministry, which it maintains in the Bible. *Truth had not its due proportion.* Nor is this all; while I was in this state of mind, unguarded, unscriptural assertions were, I doubt not, sometimes made by me, from time to time. The evidence of a state of salvation was too exclusively, although it was never absolutely, as has been said, confined to the first actings of faith in coming to the Saviour, and some texts which set forth the believer's sanctification were applied to his justification; and expressions might have been used which were unsanctifying in their principle, and unholy in their effect.

But in the midst of all this, I yet maintain that the sanctification of the child of God, an actual change of principle and practice wrought by the Holy Ghost in the believer, was really

held by me. I never should have esteemed any one, however accurate his creed, and decent his outward deportment, a real Christian without it. I desired to experience more of it in my own soul, earnestly longed to see it more plainly exhibited in those who professed the Gospel of the Son of God, and at times earnestly preached it; and that I did not preach it more than I then did, arose not from indifference to the subject, but from a mistake, and I have reason to fear, not a very uncommon mistake, that if we take care of principles in religion, holy practice is sure to follow, and that the believer needs not to be continually and minutely urged to holiness of motive, and unreserved obedience of life, which is alike contrary to experience, the direction of scripture, and the example of the Apostles; who, while they were in-

deed mainly intent upon the implanting and nourishing of principles, were equally so in constantly urging to the display of those principles in the most particular detail of Christian practice.

As a proof that the sanctification of the believer was really held by me, and that too as an important point of Christian doctrine, I would observe that my sermon on Sanctification, which I published in 1821, was really, as to its substance, preached at Hatton Garden, a little more than a year after my first coming to London in 1816; in which sermon enough, I trust, has been asserted to prove that the believer was considered by me not only as justified in the righteousness of Christ, but as sanctified by the Spirit of Christ.

So far from thinking that there is no need of the work of the Holy

Ghost upon the soul, in sanctifying it for God, for his use and service, I am convinced that without such a work there could be *no* enjoyment of God's presence upon earth, and *no* enjoyment of it in heaven, no happiness here nor hereafter; that without the being made partaker of a divine nature, the very capacity for entering into the inheritance of the saints would be entirely wanting. So far from regarding that the holiness, without which no man shall see God, is only in Christ, and not imparted to the Christian by Christ, through the power of the Holy Ghost, I am fully persuaded, that without the work of holiness wrought in the heart, not only no man *shall* see God, but no man *can* see God; that God's election of the believer, though not for holiness foreseen, yet is unto holiness, that the believer's calling is an

holy calling, that the great end of redemption is not mere deliverance from the guilt of sin, but purification from the love of sin, from all filthiness, and from every idol; that scriptural perseverance, is perseverance in the ways of God, as kept in them, by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.

But while I not only maintain this, and desire to enforce it in my pulpit, may it be more and more experienced in my soul, and exhibited in my life; yet, my dear Sir, you will agree with me that all our right principles of sanctification spring from right and experimental views of justification, and that all right views of justification are indissolubly connected with right views of our own depravity and guilt. You will feel with myself that there is no effectual principle of action, but what springs from the cross of the Son of God, and

no value for the cross in an unbroken heart, that the faith which receives Christ is under the nourishing influence of the Holy Ghost, the great teacher and parent of all holy desires and holy actions, purifying the heart, and influencing the conduct; that the love of Christ, constraining the soul, is that great principle which moves the heart of man towards God.

In short, my dear Sir, you will allow with me that truth is to be considered as a whole, and sanctification but a part, though a main, an essential part of that whole; that it stands in relation to, and connection with, the other parts of the Gospel fabric, and must stand or fall with them.

I have been thus minute and explicit in the avowal of my sentiments on this head, because I would wish you to be in possession of my whole mind upon the point.

I hope that I am not entirely ignorant that there is the seed of all Antinomianism, and of every other evil in that flesh, in which "dwelleth no good thing." This, on the one hand, and legality on the other, and both tempting the believer, make the strait way so strait as it is, and constantly render it needful for him to watch and pray lest he enter into temptation.

But I would not wish at the same time to forget, that the Antinomian is often to be discovered where we little expect to meet with him, that he is not confined by creeds and opinions, but ranges among the varied profession of the day; while he is sometimes detected among those who can talk deeply of doctrines, he is sometimes to be met with among those who, while they maintain but little of the peculiar truths of the Gospel in

their creed, exhibit as little of the spirit of that Gospel, in their tempers and in their lives; who are considered indeed as believers by others, and who confidently consider themselves as such, because some little outward change has passed upon their conduct, but the heart, the great seat of all action, remains unhumbled, unrenewed, unweaned from this world, unsanctified.

Nor would I be unmindful that he who is harassed by a spirit of legality, in some parts of his character, may be beset by a spirit of Antinomianism in others.

I would earnestly pray that that Jesus, who is King of saints as well as King of kings, may so rule in our hearts, and subdue our sins by the sceptre of his grace, that you and myself may, by happy experience, know more and more that his throne is as dear to us as his cross, and that

he is as much exalted to give us a new heart as a new righteousness, to maintain dominion over our iniquities by his Spirit, as to atone for them by his blood.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours affectionately,

J. H. EVANS.

LETTER XII.

Hampstead, August, 1826.

MY DEAR SIR,

ALTHOUGH the unreserved declaration of my opinions, on the subjects contained in these letters, be but the payment of a debt, and the fulfilment of a promise, as it regards yourself, yet as the medium by which I address you is a public one, and as these pages may arrest the attention of some one whose mind may be perplexed with difficulties on the Trinitarian question, I would, as one that has once suffered what he is now suffering, especially consider his situation, and with all affection and humility offer

him that advice which I conceive such a situation requires.

And, in the first place, I would desire such an one to reflect, that whatever difficulties may be supposed to exist on the subject of the doctrine of the Trinity, yet that it is a creed on which the holiest, the most reflecting, and the wisest among men have lived and died.

Whatever ingenuity may be displayed to evade the force of this observation, it is one which, on calm reflection, must have great weight on every considerate mind. It is no answer to reply that numbers make not error to be truth, that the proportion of Catholics greatly exceeds that of the Protestants, and that truth may for a time stand alone. All this meets not the remark. That the far greater part of mankind will choose error rather than truth, is what the Scrip-

tures prepare us to expect, while every day's experience abundantly displays it to our observation, and as long as this is the case, the mere consideration of numbers, as generally applicable to the world, cannot possibly decide any question. But I am addressing myself to one, of whom I would hope, that he has himself some perception of, and relish for, the truths of the Gospel, who may have been convinced by the Eternal Spirit of the plague of his own heart, and have been led to the cross of Immanuel for life and salvation, and whose desire is to surrender himself up to God; although his mind be for the present entangled, he must pardon me if I add, in the mazes of a delusive sophistry.

And it is for such an one to consider what are the probabilities that men, who have denied the doctrine of the atoning sacrifice, the necessity of re-

generation, who have been strangers alike to the spirituality of the law and the grace of the Gospel, who have denied, in fact, all that in reality is peculiar to the religion of Jesus Christ; what are the probabilities, I repeat, that such men should have been *right* in their rejection of the distinction of persons in the Godhead, while those who have found the great and distinguishing truths of the Gospel their meat and their drink, their medicine in sickness, their strong wine in trouble, their support in life, their comfort in death, should have been so generally, one might almost say, so universally *wrong*? Let him look at Calvin, Luther, Melancthon. Let him look at our reformers, our martyrs, our confessors. Let him look at those whose works live in the hearts of those who live for God, who speak though dead, and warn us from the

grave. What would be their concurrent, what would be their one testimony? On this creed we lived, on this creed we died. This foundation was our foundation, and upon this we built all our hopes for eternity. In our modes of explanation on some points we may have differed, but our mind was substantially the same. For we believed the Father to be God, the Son to be God, the Holy Ghost to be God, personally distinct from each other, essentially one. Seriously and affectionately would I entreat him to reflect how utterly inconceivable it is, how directly opposed to the declaration of God's word, that the church of God, which is "the pillar and ground of the truth," 1 Tim. iii. 15. should be thus grossly deceived, *believing that to be a fundamental truth, which in fact is, according to that view, no truth at all.*

In the next place, I would entreat him to consider, *whether the difficulties which present themselves on the Trinitarian side of the question, are not those only which are to be expected on any and every question of divine truth*—whether there does not appear, in every revealed doctrine, a certain point, beyond which we are instantly lost in uncertainty and confusion.

In the consideration of sin, in its first introduction into the world, in its cause and effects, as perfectly consistent with the unsullied holiness of God—in describing the invincible energy of the Holy Ghost, so needful to the final salvation of every saint, yet without destroying the free agency of the believer, and the responsibility of the unbeliever—in maintaining the doctrine of the entire corruption of man, without denying the testimony of the natural conscience against sin

—in speaking of God's free and sovereign choice of a people unto life eternal, yet leaving sin upon the sinner, and representing man's destruction as wholly of himself—in the glorious doctrine of substitution—in marking the limits between godly and slavish fear—presumption and unbelief—Antinomianism and legality; in these, and a variety of other questions, the man who has considered much, will not aver that difficulties will not at times offer themselves, however satisfied and convinced he may be as to the general issue. The comprehension of the human mind, even of the mind illumined with the rays of divine light, is, in fact, but exceedingly limited, "We see through a glass darkly."

Spiritual truth is a glorious and lovely fabric. How can it be otherwise? Its architect is God. The foun-

dations of it are deep as eternity ; its elevation high as the throne of Jehovah itself, while its dimensions are boundless as the Divine mind that formed it. In the contemplation of the building, therefore, it is no wonder if we are soon lost. We can, through grace, discern something of its design, its strength, its symmetry. Some of its parts, all indeed needful for us to know, are revealed according to the proportion of faith ; but its extreme points lie infinitely beyond us, and are quite hidden from our sight.

I embrace, therefore, the Trinitarian side of the question, not because it has no difficulties, for, on that plea, I should believe nothing, but because I see it revealed in the Bible. This is enough. I believe it because God reveals it ; and, as to the difficulties, I find it attended with far less difficulties

than any other system, while the difficulties themselves are more immediately connected with the consideration of the divine essence, of which I can really know nothing but as God is pleased to reveal himself.

I would, in the next place, *caution him against deciding from detached portions of the Word*. The comparing Scripture with Scripture, the consideration of one part with another, and the looking at the whole together, fairly, very slowly, and with much prayer to be kept from deciding in his own spirit, is the track I would, in all affection, advise him to pursue. Although Gospel truth be a system, yet it is not systematically revealed in the Scripture. The Holy Ghost is oftentimes pleased to unfold a truth of the highest importance, where we are the least prepared for its disclosure. And it is in reading Scripture as a

whole, that this will be seen and felt. Partial readings of the Word lead to certain error. It is the entire of Scripture, the analogy of faith, which must decide every controversy. And I would entreat him to reflect, that if, on the whole, he shall, through grace, be settled on that truth, which I have briefly given him my reasons for embracing, it will be enough, even if he should still see many things in it deep, mysterious, and hard to be understood. It often seems good to the infinitely wise God to exercise the faith and patience of his creature in this very way. If the removal of the difficulty be needful, he will not withhold the blessing to the soul led humbly to seek, and humbly to wait for it. But the removal of it may be in a mode we but little expect. Trials, temptations, and sorrows, may be the way through which he may graciously

burst in upon the mind, and communicate of his own inexhaustible fulness. In the use of every appointed means, it will be good for the soul thus situated, to hope and quietly to wait—to wait upon, and to wait for the Lord.

Lastly, *I would beg him to weigh well the tone and temper of spirit with which he is investigating the subject.* Men often take a state of mind to the Bible, which neutralizes every truth which is presented to them. Receiving “as new born babes,” “in meekness,” “at the feet of Jesus,” the ingrafted word, is our only right frame and posture. The page of Scripture may as easily be converted into a stage, on which the pride of our nature may love to exhibit itself, as any where else. Let him watch here, as well as pray, that he enter not into temptation.

And now, my dear Sir, I conclude. I would hope that what I have written may appear satisfactory to you, as a general answer to my own book. I have endeavoured, as far as lay in my power, to shew the fallacy of its argument, and the danger of its tendency. I take my leave, with earnest prayer that the Holy and Eternal Spirit would condescend to bless this lowly attempt to undo what I so much regret was ever done, and so to overcome the evil, as may be to the good of my fellow creatures, and to the manifestation of the divine glory.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours affectionately,

J. H. EVANS.

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